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'Our mission matters': Detonator Production honors the stars and stripes



American flag ceremonially raised at TA-22 as Detonator Production employees look on.

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At TA-22, home to the Detonator Production (DP) division, elk are a common sight among the trees and grasses. Now, so is Old Glory.

More than 18 months ago, COVID-19 forced much of our workforce to change how we do business. Although the transition allowed daily operations to continue, comradery was difficult to maintain while employees worked from home or under modified on-site conditions.

Now that many Lab workers are spending more time on-site, we're also rebuilding relationships with colleagues. DP management was on the lookout for a way to help foster those reconnections, and the conclusion of several continuous improvement projects offered an opportunity.

Flag serves as a reminder

Over the past three years, DP completed many renovation and beautification initiatives, including recently xeriscaping, similar to rock-scaping, a large section in front of the most populated building at TA-22. As a final touch, the division received a new American flag to fly outside, and management seized the opportunity to bring personnel together in a time-honored military tradition.

On Oct. 7, more than 100 DP personnel came together for the event. The crowd looked on as the national anthem played and Lt. Col. **Luke Stover** (NSIS) and Maj. **Boone Gilbreath** (C-AAC) raised the flag.

Now-retired Associate Laboratory Director for Weapons Production **Dave Eyler** made remarks at the event. "This morning's flag-raising takes me back to my days in the Navy, where every day we would have Colors [raising the flag]," Eyler expressed. "It was a moment to think about what we were really doing."

It was a unique experience for Stover and Gilbreath, too, as it had been more than a decade since either of them had the opportunity to raise a ceremonial flag. In the Air Force for 16 years and currently serving in the Office of National Security & International Studies, Stover said he jumped at the opportunity to participate in a time-honored military tradition.

Small components, big mission

Patrick Garcia, senior director of the Non-Nuclear Production Office (NNPO), expressed similar sentiment. "Our mission matters. What we do here matters," he said. "Our components may be small in stature, and may be a small part of the picture of our deterrent, but without us that picture is incomplete."

Jonathan Greenwood (DP-DO), acting division leader, reminded the group of the long list of initiatives they'd all played a role in completing. From the breakroom remodel back in 2019 to conference room and sidewalk upgrades to more recent lobby, landscaping, and restroom upgrades, the staff of DP have been hard at work making their space a welcoming, professional, and functional place to work, all while meeting milestones and getting their product out the door.

"I want to thank all of you," Greenwood said. "It's your efforts that allow us all to be here."

Greenwood and other DP management staff, such as Staff Operations Manager **Annie Hanawalt**, were thankful to have a chance to honor their staff and the mission, with support of DDW and ALDWP leadership. Now, as the flag flies every morning over TA-22, their hope is that employees will see it as a daily reminder of why we do what we do.

"The flag is a beacon of freedom and democracy," Eyler said. "The work we do has a purpose, and it's good to take a moment to remind ourselves of that."

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